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Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJ: CANADA MORE A MELTING POT THAN IS US ACCORDING TO A STUDY

1. SUMMARY: A RECENT STUDY DEMONSTRATES THAT, CONTRARY TO CONVENTIONAL WISDOM, CANADA IS MORE A MELTING POT THAN IS THE US. A SECOND OR THIRD GENERATION CANADIAN IS MORE LIKELY TO HAVE GIVEN UP HIS LINGUISTIC HERITAGE THAN IS HIS OPPOSITE NUMBER IN THE US. FURTHER, THE RATE OF ASSIMILIATION IN CANADA INCREASES AS ONE MOVES WEST FROM QUEBEC. END SUMMARY.

2. THE STUDY, CONDUCTED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT PLATTSBURGH BY PROFESSOR CALVIN VELTMAN, SOCIOLOGIST, USES DATA TO SHOW THAT LINGUISTIC ASSIMILATION IS FASTER IN CANADA THAN IN THE US, SETTING ASIDE THE SITUATION IN QUEBEC WHICH IS SUI GENERIS. ACCORDING TO THE LAST US CENSUS, THREE-QUARTERS OF THOSE WITH A MOTHER TONGUE OTHER THAN ENGLISH WERE BORN IN THE US BUT HAVE SUCCEEDED IN MAINTAINING THEIR LINGUISTIC HERITAGE. IN CONTRAST, IN CANADA ONLY ONE-HALF OF THOSE WHO SPEAK A MOTHER TONGUE OTHER THAN ENGLISH OR FRENCH WERE BORN IN CANADA. THE CONCLUSION IS, OF COURSE, THAT LINGUISTIC ASSIMILA-TION IS QUICKER IN CANADA THAN IN THE US. IF ONE
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COUNTRY DESERVES THE DESCRIPTION OF MELTING POT, THAT "DUBIOUS HONOR" SHOULD GO TO CANADA CONCLUDES

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PROFESSOR VELTMAN.

3. HE SUGGESTS THE REASON IS THE GREATER CONCENTRATION OF IMMIGRANTS IN THE US (E.G., ONE MILLION PUERTO RICANS IN NEW YORK). NOT SURPRISINGLY, IN AUGUST 12 EDITORIAL IN LE DEVOIR, CLAUDE RYAN SEES CERTAIN POLITICAL LESSONS: QUEBEC MUST BE THE FOUNDATION OF THE FRENCH FACT IN CANADA IF THERE IS TO BE ONE AT ALL. IF A SOLID FRENCH WAY OF LIFE IS TO BE BUILT, IT IS "LITTLE WONDER THAT QUEBEC...WANTS TO CONSOLIDATE ITS DEMOGRAPHIC FOUNDATION. ONE UNDERSTANDS BETTER...THE IMPORTANCE OF A POLICY WHICH DOES NOT INCLUDE ONLY LANGUAGE AS IF IT WERE A FACTOR ISOLATED AND INDEPENDENT OF OTHERS, BUT WHICH BEARS ALSO ON ALL ELEMENTS...".

4. COMMENT: VLETMAN'S FINDINGS COULD SERIOUSLY CRAMP THE STYLE OF CANADIAN SPEECHWRITERS FOR WHOM THE IMAGE OF CANADA AS A "MOSAIC" IN CONTRAST TO THE US MELTING POT HAS LONG BEEN A SURE-FIRE RHETORICAL GAMBIT. VELTMAN ALSO PROVIDES FUEL FOR QUEBEC'S CONTENTION THAT SPECIAL MEASURES (SUCH AS QUEBEC'S LAW 22) INCLUDING ADDITIONAL CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS ARE NEEDED IF FRENCH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE ARE TO SURVIVE IN THE CANADIAN ANGLOPHONE CALDRON.
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